

**Claims**

What is claimed is:

- 5        1. A lace trapping device for retaining the tied ends of lacing on footwear, the device comprising:
- a lace trapping element capable of being attached to a piece of footwear adjacent to a lower threaded portion of the lacing on the piece of footwear spaced from the tied ends of the lacing a sufficient distance to permit unimpeded tying of the ends of
- 10       the lacing the lace trapping element capable of opening to receive the tied ends of the lacing and capable of closing over the tied ends of the lacing and trapping the tied ends of the lacing;
- a securing means on the lace trapping element for removably engaging at least one end of the lace trapping element with at least one other end of the lace trapping
- 15       element to bind the lace trapping element over the tied ends of the lacing.
2. The lace trapping device of claim 1 wherein the lace trapping element comprises a strip of flexible material having at least one opening to admit the lacing through the opening while threading the lacing through eyelets in the footwear to attach
- 20       the lace trapping element to the footwear.
3. The lace trapping device of claim 2 wherein the securing means comprises mating hook and loop fasteners.

4. The lace trapping device of claim 3 wherein the lace trapping device is a single strip of flexible material having a central opening to receive the threaded lacing and a mating piece of hook and loop fasteners at each end of the strip on opposite sides of the strip so that the middle of the strip is threaded into the lacing at a lower end of the lacing and the two ends of the strip fold over the tied ends of the lacing and the mating hook and loop fasteners are secured together.
5. The lace trapping device of claim 2 wherein the opening is centrally positioned on the strip of flexible material and the lace trapping element further comprises two tension arms attached to the flexible material with one tension arm on each side of the opening, the tension arms capable of interlocking around each other to trap the tied ends of the lacing between the tension arms.
6. The lace trapping device of claim 5 wherein each of the two tension arms further comprises an enlarged outer end which contacts an enlarged outer end on the other of the tension arms to help retain the two interlocking tension arms together.
7. The lace trapping device of claim 2 wherein the opening is centrally positioned on the strip of flexible material and the lace trapping element further comprises a tension ring segment attached to the material one side of the opening and a tension ring segment on the other side of the opening, the tension ring segments each

having mating teeth which tension ring segments are capable of interlocking the mating teeth to trap the tied ends of the lacing.

- 5           8. The lace trapping device of claim 2 wherein the flexible material with the opening has a second sheet of flexible material hinged thereto and the securing means comprises a pronged snap element protruding from the flexible material adjacent to the opening and the second sheet of flexible material has a mating snap element opening therethrough so that the pronged snap element is capable of snap fitting in the snap element opening to trap the tied ends of the lacing between the two sheets  
10           of flexible material.
9. The lace trapping device of claim 1 wherein the lace trapping element comprises two strips of flexible material each secured at one end to one side of the lacing at a lower end of the threaded lacing and an outer end capable of overlapping the other  
15           strip, wherein the securing means comprises mating hook and loop fasteners on each outer end of the strips.
10. The lace trapping device of claim 1 wherein the lace trapping element comprises a single strips of flexible material secured at one end to one side of the lacing at a  
20           lower end of the threaded lacing and further comprising a loop of flexible material secured to the footwear on an opposite side of the threaded lacing, wherein the securing means comprises mating hook and loop fasteners with one mating

element of the hook and loop fasteners attached to an outer end of the strip and another element of the mating hook and loop fasteners attached to the end of the strip adjacent to the footwear, so that the strip is capable of looping under the loop and bending back over itself to engage the mating hook and loop fasteners with the tied ends of the lacing under the strip.